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ABSTRACT

This career planning workbook takes Australian job seekers through step-by-step assessments of their current work situation. Topics addressed in the five parts of the workbook are: (1) analyzing the situation; (2) information resources; (3) setting career goals; (4) planning the next career action; and (5) preparing for transition. Part one contains information on experiential learning, current awareness, constraints, career problems, career hazards, employment future, working conditions, and career vision. Part two contains information on the following topics: information hunting, counseling needs, career development support, networks, management assistance, mentoring, and sources of printed information. Part three discusses setting goals, defining wants, analyzing research, decision making, statements, and the goal-setting process. Part four addresses overcoming obstacles, career handling, and career advancement. The topics covered in the fifth section are the next job goal, job application writing, career action step request, resume writing, interviewing, defining skills, career discussion, hasty resignations, and career development contracts. The workbook contains 32 self-analysis and career planning checklists, worksheets, and exercises. (NLA)

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YOUR CAREER PLANNER

The Essential Guide for Successful Decision Making

PAUL STEVENS

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Your Career Planner

Reducing the Risks to Those Worth Taking

Dedication

To those conscientious professionals who believe that work can be fun and who work strenuously to assist others to realise this joy.

Also to the Worklife team—Ann, Peggy and Natalie—always encouraging, sometimes criticising thoughtfully and often wishing I were not so busy with my work.

Your Career Planner

Reducing the Risks to Those Worth Taking

PAUL STEVENS

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Sydney

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About the Author

After twenty-one years' employment experience as a Personnel Manager dealing with the problems of employer/employee relationships in the UK, Canada and Australia, Paul Stevens created The Centre for Worklife Counselling in 1980. His concern for individuals and their search for satisfaction in their work motivates his daily counselling and training activities, as well as his writing.

Paul has become nationally known as a counsellor, broadcaster and author of twenty-one publications on worklife and career management issues.

While continuing his counselling practice, he has been engaged by organisations to advise on their career development activities and to assist organisational restructuring where it impacts the job satisfaction of employees. Paul has extended his work to include career support to members of Religious Orders. He is also engaged as a consultant to State Governments, devising innovative measures which assist both employer and employee to cope with change.

An Explanation—Worklife

The Centre for Worklife Counselling often provokes comment about its name. The term 'worklife' was chosen to reflect our continuing work in research, counselling, training and publishing material which relates to improving people's enjoyment from their employment activities and other aspects of their lives.

We do not accept the traditional view of career counselling—that is, to help people acquire satisfaction only from their working hours. We consider that occupational satisfaction can only occur when a person's total needs are included in the assessment of what is lacking and what needs to be done to increase inner well-being, improved relationships with others, and effective performance both at work and non-work activities. Ours is a holistic approach—we try to consider all features of a person at the same time as maintaining a respect for personal privacy by the use of non-threatening inquiries into thoughts and circumstances.

Our publications reflect this philosophy.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

PRESENTER: PAUL STEVENS

A range of workshops for which the contents are amended to reflect each organisation's particular concerns:

WINNING IN THE JOB MARKET to support terminating employees achieve satisfactory outcomes in their re-employment search.

SCHOOL FOR COUNSELLORS to guide human resource personnel to counsel and coach employees effectively about their worklife dilemmas and manage their career transitions with the least personal hurt. Learning Guides, recommended reading lists and sources of further assistance are provided.

CAREER MANAGEMENT TRAINING to develop the skills of trainers in successful delivery of career development workshops for employees and their managers. Step-by-step Trainer's Manuals are supplied, as well as practice presentations and constructive criticism.

EXECUTIVE MANAGER BRIEFINGS which lead discussions positively on developing pragmatic career support strategies (what works—what doesn't) which meet both employees' and employer's objectives, assist organisational change and renewal and address critical career issues and concerns of the 1990s.

PLANNING AND MANAGING YOUR CAREER which teaches **how** and **when** to take sensible, achievable career development actions and why our underlying theme is that they should be 'employee initiated'. Abdication of employees' personal responsibility for their career progress is not taught, though achieving job satisfaction through commitment is.

Participants in each of these training events are provided with a relevant selection from the **twenty one titles authored by Paul Stevens** and designed to reinforce tuition by self-study and active involvement in completing the exercises, questionnaires, problem-clarifying aids, constraints analysis, planning and goal setting these texts contain.

The Centre for Worklife Counselling

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Introduction

Your Career Planner is designed to help you review your current employment, your career future, the things you will need to consider to make desired worklife events happen and set realistic plans for their achievement. The publication's major goal is to help you to come to conclusions about where you want to be with your career and how best to get there.

This is achieved by:

a) going through several steps in evaluating your current situation;

b) identifying your career-related strengths and preferred skills;

c) becoming aware of what work environment conditions suit you better;

d) identifying your needs for further information;

e) networking for useful people to assist you;

f) developing plans and goals;

g) preparing to present your claims for consideration by others.

Your Career Planner uses your ideas, your information and your enthusiasm to develop your own career.

It is up to you to make use of *Your Career Planner* as a resource to manage your career future. It will help you to clarify what you are looking for and how to achieve it. In other words, how to make smart and informed decisions.

There are benefits in reviewing thoroughly what you want in your worklife, identifying who can support you and what specific assistance you require from your employer or other people. Your use of *Your Career Planner* will help you to be more in control of your future and achieve:

- a greater capacity for creativity in your worklife;
- a feeling of accomplishment;
- more fun out of going to work;
- increased self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem; and
- an extended capacity to become that self you really are.

Your Career Planner will take you through the six key stages in managing your career effectively:

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Clarifying Issues and Concerns—Assembling an Information Base through Structured Analysis—Reviewing Current Job Effectiveness—Checking Employment Experiences—Abilities—Interests—Values—Primary Wants—Employment Environment Preferences—Lifestyle Considerations

INTERPRETING DATA

Analysis—Transferable Skills Identification—Career Requirements Developed—Resolving Ambiguities—Lifestyle Integration—Monetary Needs and Considerations—Barriers to Success—Identifying Perceived and Real Constraints

OPPORTUNITY AWARENESS

Collecting Appropriate Information—Research—Organisation Information Gathering—Reality Testing—Cultivating a Network—Mentoring—Evaluating Results—Career Action(s) Options Selection

DECISION LEARNING

Evaluating Career Action Options—Trade-offs—Deciding on Goals —Career Transition Scheduling

TRANSITION TRAINING

Rehearsing for Negotiations—Documenting Short- and Long-term Goals—Developing Strategies for Success—Checking Career Action Preparation—Preparing Requests for Approval—Auditing Career Transition Progress

TRANSITION ACCOMPLISHED

Review of Completed Career Action Steps—Assessment of Well-being

Part One

Analysing Your Situation

Learning from your experience

The following questions encourage you to think critically about your present or most recent job. Your answers will help you decide what the important considerations are when you are evaluating your next career action step.

My main responsibilities are:

-
-
-

Since I have been in this job it has changed in these ways:

-
-
-

I enjoy this job for these reasons:

-
-
-

I dislike this job for these reasons:

-
-
-

What are some of the problems my employer currently faces to which I contribute solutions?

-
-
-

How can I contribute more effectively to solving them?

-
-
-

What new responsibilities have I taken on in the last year?

-
-
-

This job is adding the following to my inventory of new competencies / skills:

-
-
-

I am not developing the following competencies / skills which I believe I need for my future career:

-
-
-

This would be a much better job if the following were different:

-
-
-

In order to use my present job to prepare for my future, what actions should I be taking?

-
-
-

How have I helped my employer improve their service to customers / general public in the past year?

-
-
-

What are the implications for my future career if I perform well in my present job?

-
-
-

What factors should be avoided or minimised in my next career action step to improve my worklife satisfaction and productivity?

•

•

•

What has felt wrong in my career to date?

•

•

•

What were the reasons for my past three job changes? Why did I pursue the options I did?

•

•

•

How comfortable do I feel in my current occupation?

How do I rate my liking for my current job?

What would increase my degree of liking my current job?

-
-
-

What would increase my degree of liking my current occupation?

-
-
-

Are you keeping up-to-date?

Have I identified what changes are likely to affect my current job during next twelve months? What are they?

•

•

•

What program of reading in my area of work am I following at present?

•

•

•

What three new ideas am I presently working on to introduce to, and enhance the outputs from, my current job?

•

•

•

What new knowledge have I identified that will be useful to acquire over the coming six months?

•

•

•

Have I researched and enrolled in at least one in-company or external training course to occur during the next four months? Yes / No

Your constraints

This exercise will help you explore the career transition difficulties which affect your choices. Reflect on your life and current situation. Consider each of the following constraints and record your answers:

My education and upbringing constrain my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

My physical health constrains my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

My self-confidence level constrains my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

My current manager constrains my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

My age is a limitation on my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

My commitments (e.g. family, financial, etc.) constrain my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

My preference for where I want to live constrains my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

My current incomplete self-development actions constrain my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

My current employment environment constrains my career in the following ways:

-
-
-

Identifying your career problem

Which of the following career problems do you want to resolve now that you have completed this analysis of your current situation?

✓

- ❑ I can't afford to make another mistake in my next career move.
- ❑ My skills are not as useful for my next career move as in the past.
- ❑ I am bored with my current tasks.
- ❑ I have reached a plateau in the salary scale for my current career ladder.
- ❑ A recent performance appraisal review assessed me below what I wanted to achieve.
- ❑ I have trouble setting worklife goals.
- ❑ I recently lost out on a promotion or transfer I wanted.
- ❑ I am questioning whether the career direction I am following needs re-examination.
- ❑ A setback in my personal life is prompting a reassessment of who I am and where I really want to go.

None of the above, but the following problem(s):

-
-
-

Which career hazards require your attention?

Mark those which concern you.

✓

- ❑ **Unable to manage your manager skilfully**: What your boss regards as desired performance counts more than your job description. If in doubt, find out!

- ❑ **Failing to think strategically**: Focusing on detail may result in not seeing how your work fits in with that of your colleagues. Don't neglect work which helps them as well as you.

- ❑ **Over-the-top ambition:** Being competitive is important and will get you noticed. But standing out too much as an individual will produce resentment and could be counterproductive to advancing your own career.

- ❑ **Insensitivity to others**: Listen to what is **not** being said, as well as what is. 'Hidden agendas' at work cause the same damage as computer viruses in software, i.e. both are not easy to detect, but can sabotage earnest work activity.

- ❑ **Over-dependence on mentors or sponsors:** The value of your informal advisers about the career action steps you are planning is to challenge your ideas, not to tell you what to do. Like fertilisers they should be changed regularly.

- ❑ **Clinging to past roles**: Each job content change, whether a transfer or promotion or a new employer, demands different behaviour and personal style. Triple check you have adjusted to suit the changed circumstances both of your job content and your employment environment.

- ❑ **Solo running**: When problems are really difficult, don't hesitate to recruit help from others. Better to find a successful solution as part of a team, than be a loser who tried alone.

- ❑ **Breaching trust**: Failure to follow through on promises to others jeopardises organisational efficiency. Also, people who can assist your career reduce in number if you do this more than once.

- ❑ **Liking everybody**: In reality this is impossible, so don't pretend. But do demonstrate respect for technical competence in others. Your words—spoken and written—should consistently reflect this in your communications at work.

Your employment future

What job content skills would I like most to improve in the next twelve months?

-
-
-

What skills and knowledge do I want to acquire in the course of the next two years?

-
-
-

What possibilities come to mind as career paths for me?

-
-
-

What more do I need to learn before I can be confident of these alternative career paths being:

a) suitable for me?

b) achievable?

Which of the career paths I have specified do I really know about?

-
-
-

Which of the career paths do I really like?

-
-
-

What are the aspects that appeal to me and why?

-
-
-

Will any of the following influence either career path: consumer trends, technological changes, government legislation, profitability of employer? If so, in what way?

-
-
-

As I look ahead, the worklife aspects I look forward to are:

-
-
-

What working conditions suit you?

Underline or circle what you know suits you:

structured work tasks
close supervision
high pressure
performance appraisal system
fast pace
salary progression based on merit
no smoking environment
flexi hours
own office
set hours of work
window to look out of
strict dress standards
competitive environment
clear job description

If the working conditions which appeal to you are not specified above, list them here:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Your career vision

Look at your answers to all the questions on the preceding pages. Draft a vision of your employment future in three years' time that is clear, meaningful and achievable. Ask yourself 'What would I be willing to consider seriously: change of career direction, occupation or job?' Describe what you want your employment future to be. Your description should take into account:

- your self-honest reflection;
- the supply and demand in your proposed career path direction;
- both short-term and long-term perspective;
- your evaluation of risks worth taking.

DO IT NOW HERE!

Additional Notes

Part Two

Your Information Resources

Career planning requires information hunting

S	•	What do I do well and enjoy?
E	•	What skills do I have?
L	•	What type of problems can I solve?
F	•	What working conditions suit me?

O	•	Who might assist me in improving my current job?
T	•	What kinds of alternative jobs are available?
H	•	Where are these kinds of job?
E	•	Who makes the selection decisions?
R	•	Who has done this job or type of work before?
S		

Your information or counselling needs

Tick areas of concern in your career transition preparation on the following checklist. Then seek help where a need is indicated.

✓

- ❑ Choosing a new career.
- ❑ Help with life planning concerns.
- ❑ My values are in conflict with what I do at work.
- ❑ Alternative career options where I work.
- ❑ Learning how to network.
- ❑ Need for information about the skill requirements of different jobs.
- ❑ Determining appropriate type of job in relation to my training and employment experience.
- ❑ Determining appropriate type of job in relation to my interests, values, skills and personality.
- ❑ How to transfer from one department to another.
- ❑ Long-range occupational planning.
- ❑ Help in obtaining a part-time job / job-sharing arrangement / temporary work.
- ❑ Résumé counselling.
- ❑ Application counselling (new job, promotion, transfer).
- ❑ Interview training and rehearsal.
- ❑ Identifying appropriate career counsellors to contact.
- ❑ Identifying sources of useful information.

Support for your career development

Your employer is likely to have staff who are trained in assisting the development of the human resources employed. Their job titles maybe Personnel Officer, EEO Adviser, Staff Development Officer, Career Development Manager, or similar. They usually provide one or more of the following services:

- Administer and interpret assessments of your abilities, interest, values and motivation.
- Assist with résumé preparation.
- Provide support during career transitions.
- Help you to prepare your case for changes in job content or job role.
- Supply information about career paths.
- Advise on counselling services in the community.
- Offer help with worklife decision making.

Record below the names of staff from whom you can obtain assistance:

Name	Location	Nature of Help Sought

Identifying networks

A very important career planning action is NETWORKING. Networking is a procedure for establishing contacts and obtaining useful information from people. To start networking you must define what you need to know. Then an appropriate network of people can be identified and contacted. Networks can provide you with the support and advice of others, as well as:

- increasing your skills and self-confidence in obtaining information;
- stimulating thoughtful appraisal of realities and your options;
- building a referral base for further career information explorations;
- enabling you to take action rather than waiting for events to happen;
- often uncovering actual job vacancies.

Essentially, you have two ways of finding out about career opportunities. One is to read about them; the other is to talk to people who are or have been working in the area(s) that interest you.

Some of your sources of contacts for NETWORKING are based on:

- Workplace colleagues
- Friendship
- Professional respect
- Common bond (neighbours, club members, etc.)
- Casual acquaintance
- Family relationship
- Your Christmas card list
- Those with whom you attend training or courses

Record here the NETWORKS you believe would be useful to you:

-
-
-

Assistance from your manager

The first mentor contact you should consider is your current manager. Here is a checklist to prompt you on the sorts of career management advice your manager may be able to assist you with:

✓

- ❑ Learning what developmental experiences could be assigned to me while performing my current job.
- ❑ Clarifying how my current performance will be measured.
- ❑ Reviewing my draft career development plan.
- ❑ Sharing and checking my audit of my skills, competencies, personal development needs.
- ❑ Checking my understanding of which of my skills may be transferable from my current job to a different one.
- ❑ Obtaining information about alternative work areas within the organisation.
- ❑ Testing the reality of my proposed next career action step.
- ❑ Discussing my timetable for my next job application.

Major transitions in worklife where mentors are useful

Career Awareness

Support and information needs

You may be about to:

- choose an educational institution for study
- accept a new job offer
- establish a small business
- change careers or relocate.

Mentors can help you consider the realities ahead so that an informed selection can be made.

Source of mentors:

Tertiary education lecturers, former students, employment agency consultants, small business advisory service, career counsellors, Chambers of Commerce.

Career Preparation

Support and information needs

You have selected your career transition direction. Adjusting to new learning and new environments is often difficult. A mentor can help you to:

- assess tutoring, counselling services or more experienced students (**as a student**)
- find out about the employer information which cannot be learned by carrying out job tasks (**as a new employee**)

Source of mentors:

Personnel staff, designated mentors provided by the employer, work colleagues, your manager.

Career Orientation

Support and information needs

Making the transition into meaningful work and securing the cooperation of work colleagues requires intuitive solutions to immediate problems. To become competent you need to do more than apply your knowledge to the job. You must earn the right to feel welcomed and respected. Mentors can assist your understanding of the employer's culture, the norms of behaviour, how to obtain help from others.

Source of mentors:

Professional associations, human resource personnel, employees with longer service.

Career Expansion

Support and information needs

At intervals you should consider your career path options. Frequently the scarcity of information restricts a comprehensive evaluation of alternatives. Mentors can help provide this information or recommend sources where it can be found. Their advice can facilitate:

- preparation of your development plans for self-development
- expansion of your talent
- improvement of your eligibility for consideration

Source of mentors:

Subject area interest groups, proven professionals, acquaintances in the same industry.

Career Advancement

Support and information needs

How and to whom you should present your case for what you seek and why you merit it are support and information needs at this career stage. Those who have traversed it represent the best source of mentors with whom strategies, documentation and communication methods can be discussed. You seek their counsel for a specific purpose.

Source of mentors:

Your manager, personnel staff, senior members of your profession who work for other employers, successful role models, executives, Institutes of Management.

Identifying mentors

From whom I may be able to obtain useful advice other than my current manager relevant to:

overcoming my constraints?

-
-
-

realism about what I have in mind?

-
-
-

Whom do I know who can lead me to more contacts for information?

-
-
-

What printed material could be useful for me to obtain relevant to my career direction interest areas? (e.g. Annual Reports, Organisation Charts, Job Descriptions, Personnel Directory, Employer's Newsletters, Work Area Descriptions, etc.)

-
-
-

Sources of printed information

Nobody serious about managing their career effectively should initiate a career action step without researching information. This can be obtained from PEOPLE and PRINTED MATERIAL.

The more information you can find helps ensure that the decision you make regarding career action steps will be easier and well based.

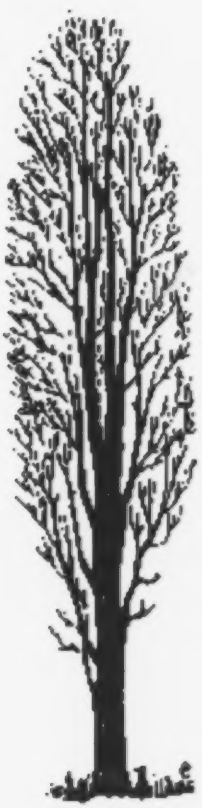
The following are sources of printed information relating to worklife decision making. Check whether you have obtained data from all sources that are relevant for what you have in mind. Underline what you have not obtained to remind you to follow up:

- Newsletter of related Professional Association
- Journal of relevant Professional Association
- Annual Report of current Employer
- Information Pack from Public Relations Officer for current Employer
- Trade Journals for relevant Industry
- Directories in Reference Section of your local Public Library (data about employers, occupations, tertiary education courses, economic information about supply and demand in different occupations)
- Useful texts from the Australian Institute of Management Bookshop
- Reports and/or guides from the Australian Government Publications Service bookshop
- Brochures about relevant training and skills development courses, workshops, seminars

Additional Notes

Part Three

Setting Your Career Goals



Why set career goals?

Goals give you direction.

Goals give you motivation.

Goals reinforce your self-esteem.

Your career is a sequence of work experiences which, at each stage, requires setting goals so that your career action steps:

- include your work task preferences;
- have elements of worthwhile risk taking;
- include schedules;
- include measurement on how you are progressing;
- more easily overcome constraints and obstacles;
- provide satisfaction in their achievement.

Your goals do not necessarily have to be related to a promotion. They can relate, for example, to developmental activities such as:

- On-the-job Training
- Special Assignments
- Job Rotation
- Transfer
- External Courses
- Internal Courses
- Self-improvement Activity

Defining what you want

Spend at least five minutes on each question. Each is an issue for you to consider in defining what you want. Your answers will provide important guidelines for your career goal setting and decision making which follow.

What job task responsibilities?

What knowledge and which skills of mine to be used?

With what type of manager?

With what kinds of work colleagues?

In what kind of unit or department?

Job location — commuting and travel preferences?

What must the remuneration include?

Now write your next job objective here and follow this structure. Fill in the words you consider should go in the brackets.

A ... (function title) ... position where my ability in ... (your three primary skills) ... will result in ... (outcomes, i.e. benefits for your employer) ...

Function Title:

Your Three Primary Skills:

Outcomes:

What are the difficulties I may need to overcome in making such a move?

What steps should I take now to have the best chance of making a successful transition to my next job?

Within what time period do I now want to achieve a career transition from my current job to new one?

Analysing your research

What have I learned from printed materials, networking and mentors about my proposed career path?

What do I need to acquire that I had not thought of in order to achieve progress along this career path?

What do I need to avoid in order to achieve this progress?

Career goal decision making

If you are having difficulty deciding between alternatives for your next career action step, use the following exercise to assist you.

Consider the decision you need to make. It is likely to be between two or more career action options (alternatives).

Step 1: For each alternative, write down a list of as many outcomes as you can think of—that is, consequences from choosing the alternative. Some will be negative and others positive in nature.

Step 2: Assign to each outcome on the list a number, a value, from -10 to +10. When values approach 0 the outcome is of little, or low, importance in relationship to others on your list. The negative outcomes should be recorded as a minus, that is -10 to -1.

Step 3: For each outcome listed, evaluate the probability that it will happen. For example, 0 is that the outcome will definitely not occur. 10 is that it definitely will occur. 5 indicates a fifty-fifty chance that it will occur. Write these figures in the second column.

Step 4: Multiply the value of each outcome by the probability of occurring. Write these answers in the third column. Add up this column. Repeat this procedure for the other alternative(s).

Step 5: The alternative with the highest expected value is a guide to the most appropriate option for you to take.

Write here your conclusion from carrying out this exercise:

Preparing your career goal statement

When you are preparing your two career goal statements, keep the following in mind.

- Does each objective start with the word 'To' followed by an action verb?
- Does each produce a single key result when accomplished?
- Does each specify a target date for its accomplishment?
- Does it specify only the 'what' and the 'when' and lack the 'why' and 'how'?
- Is it tough and demanding but also realistic and attainable?
- Will the result justify the expenditure of my time, emotion and resources required to achieve it?
- Have I defined the problem(s) each career goal will overcome?
- Have I identified at least two possible solutions?
- Have I tested my planned goal with other people whose advice I value?
- Have I prepared a plan of action to follow when I am satisfied each goal is the most appropriate one for me to pursue?

The goal-setting process

It is useful to prepare two Career Goal Statements: one for short-term, i.e. the next six months; and the other for the longer term, i.e. to be achieved within three years. Record your data for the four headings for your short-term goal here:

CAREER GOAL STATEMENT
Short-term Goal (Next Six Months)

My Performance Improvement:

List of my needs and planned actions

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

My Training Plan:

In priority sequence

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

My Self-development Plan:

Personal actions relating to development of my range of skills

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

My Job Enrichment Plan:

How my current job may be enhanced to increase satisfaction

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

CAREER GOAL STATEMENT
Long-term Goal (Next Three Years)

Step 1 : Write down your long-term career goal

Step 2 : Describe each career action step necessary to achieve it

Step 3 : Assign a date for each career action step to be completed

Step 4 : Test your goal-setting process by showing it to others for their comments.

Step 5: Revise it if you receive good advice to do so.

What three factors make each goal statement achievable?

Goal Statement #1

1 _____

_____

_____

2 _____

_____

_____

3 _____

_____

_____

Goal Statement #2

1 _____

_____

_____

2 _____

_____

_____

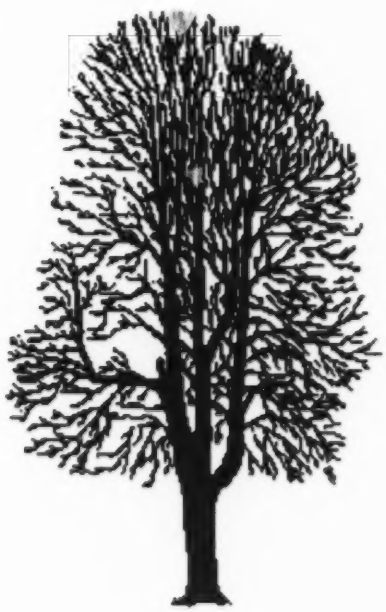
3 _____

_____

_____

Part Four

Planning Your Next Career Action



Obstacles to your proposed career action

As well as marketable attributes, each person has different kinds of restraints or obstacles to their career transitions:

Are yours:

✓

- ❑ Physical?
- ❑ Gender-related?
- ❑ Educational?
- ❑ Financial?
- ❑ Inadequate Information?
- ❑ Geographical?
- ❑ Self-knowledge?
- ❑ Job Performance Record?
- ❑ Psychological?

The next exercise asks you to identify specific obstacles you currently believe prevent you from the career goal you have defined. The exercise also requires that you list all the resources you can use to assist you to overcome or find a way round these obstacles so that your career goal can become a reality.

Overcoming obstacles

Record your perceived OBSTACLES here. Then list all the RESOURCES you can think of to minimise these obstacles.

Obstacles:

Resources:

16 tips for handling your career effectively

Consider the following 16 tips. Choose at least four to focus on improving over the next six months.

1. **PERFORM** efficiently those job tasks which will help your boss the most.

2. **FIND OUT** what your boss regards as good performance in your job. It may differ from your current opinion.

3. **MASTER** your job as quickly as possible and pass your knowledge to another person. In this way, lack of a suitable replacement will not stop your promotional chances.

4. **LEARN** to like yourself as a precious unique human being. There is no need for you to wait in the wings. You need to move yourself into the spotlight so others can see, respect and take notice of you.

5. **STEP OUTSIDE** the confines of your job description; make sure your actions are regarded as constructive initiative—not just attention seeking.

6. **DON'T** agree to a promotion if it contains activities you don't like. We perform better when doing things we enjoy.

7. **EXPAND** opportunities for those in power to learn more about you by achieving success in outside work activities such as in community service organisations and/or personal development studies.

8. **IDENTIFY** a well-regarded person in a senior position within your employment environment from whom to seek career advancement advice and return the favour by loyalty and respect.

9. **SUGGEST** thoroughly prepared recommendations—not criticisms—for problems within your employment environment.

10. **DEVELOP** your skills at interpersonal relationships; accept the fact that 'office politics' exist; re-examine your personal values regularly so that when faced with ethical dilemmas at work you will know what to do without procrastination.

11. **RECOGNISE** that ability alone will not advance your career—persistence, hard work and being seen as personally ambitious, but an effective team worker, will.

12. **SMILE** a lot. Others notice and favour people with happy but conscientious dispositions. The despondent people are often regarded as too risky to move to new positions.

13. **ENSURE** you have a good variety of interests outside your worklife career to prevent the stress of your efforts bringing you harm.

14. **PRACTISE** self-nomination. Don't wait to be offered promotion or transfer. Let it be known what different position you want and present a case for why you merit it.

15. **PLAN** for more than one career path. Ensure you develop skills/knowledge for different types of positions. First, because you will then be better placed to take advantage of opportunities. Second, as a protection against falling behind in your knowledge and skills development.

16. **CHANGE** employers only after deep thought and thorough research. Accept a new position not just for more pay but primarily for opportunities for new knowledge in your field.

Advancing with your current employer

Check this list before you start your selected career action step.

✓

- ❑ Have I identified what additional knowledge, skill and experience I will need in order to become a realistic candidate?
- ❑ Have I analysed my performance in the current job and identified those areas I need to improve?
- ❑ Have I discussed my aspirations with my boss and the human resource staff and sought their advice on my planned actions?
- ❑ Have I checked the career paths of other people who have held the next job in which I am interested?
- ❑ Have I discussed my plans with friends and contacts outside my employer whose judgement I respect?
- ❑ Have I drawn up an action plan for achieving what I want?
- ❑ Have I applied to enrol in training courses in subjects relevant to my career path?
- ❑ Have I encouraged my manager to assign me projects which will help fill the gaps in my experience?
- ❑ Have I sought the advice of appropriate people regarding books and journals which would be useful for me to read?
- ❑ Have I established review dates at which I can check my progress towards my chosen career goal?

Additional Notes

Part Five

Preparing For Your Transition

Essentials for achieving your next job goal

✓ Tick those you have arranged.

Underline those you need to find or complete.

✓

❑ Thorough self-assessment of what I want and what I can offer.

❑ Consultation with my spouse / close friend / partner.

❑ Résumé which confidently conveys data about me.

❑ Interview rehearsals.

❑ First class typing facilities.

❑ Support group for relaxation.

❑ Clothes in which I look and feel good.

❑ A mentor with whom to discuss difficulties and my progress.

❑ Stress management techniques for my nerves.

❑ A counsellor whom I can trust and share my findings.

Golden rules for job application writing

- Direct your data in terms of benefits to the hiring manager, not the benefits you want.
- Describe your abilities, potential and things you can do for the hiring manager by using your past experience as proof to support the claims you make.
- Emphasise how well you perform your tasks rather than leave this to conjecture.
- Describe what you have accomplished rather than record your responsibilities. They are not the same. Do this in terms of describing increased profits, money saved, production increased, etc.
- Avoid going into excessive detail about education and personal details.
- Avoid the use of such terms as 'synopsis of résumé', 'amplified résumé', 'confidential résumé'.
- Underline, capitalise, centre or use bold print for headings to emphasise information.
- Do not cram your résumé. It gives it a cluttered look and distracts readers.
- Leave plenty of white space on each page.
- Keep at least a 2.5 cm margin on either side of your paper.
- Paragraphs must be short. Double space between paragraphs.

Checking your career action step request

Many requests for approval for career-related desires require submission in writing to your manager or other people. The following will help you audit your submission whether it is in résumé form, a memorandum or letter.

	Yes	No
Have I considered the prospective reader's requirements—how the reader's needs will be met by reading what I have written?	❑	❑
Have I excluded data which the reader does not need to know and which may distract from my real objective?	❑	❑
Have I used short words, short sentences and short paragraphs?	❑	❑
Have I avoided using 'buzz' words, or jargon, which the reader may not understand or lower the quality of what I have written?	❑	❑
Wherever possible have I used active rather than passive verbs?	❑	❑
Have I used adjectives and adverbs sparingly?	❑	❑
Is the tone of my communication positive, courteous and persuasive?	❑	❑
Have I checked for spelling mistakes, typing errors and incorrect grammar?	❑	❑
Are my recorded details accurate, complete, relevant and stated clearly?	❑	❑
Are my statements correct with no unjustified exaggerations or avoidable inaccuracies?	❑	❑

Hints on résumé writing

Think about your proposed area of work. They need your assets, not your liabilities. Their primary interest is in what you can do for them now—not in the problems you think you have in your past.

It is not recommended that you falsify your past—that has an uncanny way of coming out in the open and can harm your subsequent relationship with your employer. If questioned by an interviewer about some delicate matter, answer honestly but without assigning too much blame to yourself. Most interviewers are experienced people who know well the employment circumstances which can work against you through no fault of your own.

There is a further point which will help. Write your résumé in positive ways, such as emphasising your achievements rather than listing just your past employers and job titles.

Hints:

a. Avoid long sentences—maximum of two lines wherever possible.

b. Use simple English unless technical jargon is required for precision in your professional field.

c. Avoid excessive noun strings, such as 'Responsible for evaluation of the department's overall corporate strategic plan development requirements'.

d. Keep the tone positive and business like.

e. Use active verbs, such as 'Investigated staff grievances', rather than abstract verbal nouns, like 'Responsible for the investigation of staff grievances'.

Checking over your résumé

✓	
❑	Is your name at the top of each page?
❑	Does your career objective appear immediately below your name?
❑	Are your current address and telephone number included?
❑	Have you included an alternative phone number where a message may be left for you?
❑	Is your highest educational level shown first in the education section?
❑	Do your words show results you have achieved, problems you have dealt with or important learning experiences you have had?
❑	Have you avoided including information on your religion, ethnic origin and citizenship?
❑	Have you avoided stating how much you expect to be paid?
❑	Have you succeeded in not using 'I' more than a few times, if at all?
❑	Is your use of punctuation correct?
❑	Is the spelling correct?
❑	Have you avoided grammatical errors?
❑	Have you removed all unnecessary words?
❑	Have you shown and discussed your final draft with at least two people?
❑	Is the résumé clearly set out and concise?
❑	Do your key accomplishments stand out through the use of capital letters, bold print or underlining?
❑	Is your résumé neatly and accurately typed?
❑	Is it free from errors and marks caused by corrections?
❑	Is the résumé typed on A4-sized paper?
❑	Is it typed on only one side of each page?
❑	Is it typed with wide margins and space between paragraphs?
❑	Have you found a good quality photocopying machine that will make copies on A4-sized paper?
❑	Is your résumé well organised, persuasive and positive in tone?
❑	Have you obtained envelopes suitable for A4 paper so that your résumé can be conveyed without being folded?
❑	Are you satisfied that your résumé says everything about you which could interest the hiring manager / selection committee and nothing which will waste their time?

Types of interview

Before you attend them, consider what type of interview you will be experiencing in order to achieve your goal:

	Yes ✓	No
Interview Selection Panel	❑	❑
Informal Discussion	❑	❑
Interview by One Interviewer	❑	❑
Series of Interviews	❑	❑

Now review your experience at interviews by answering the following:

What will I do differently on the next occasion in order to increase my chances of success?

•

•

•

Which questions will I answer differently at my next interview?

•

•

•

What will my revised responses be?

•

•

•

Preparing for career interviews

Rehearse for career review or selection interview discussions by describing past worklife achievements using these action verbs to commence your description.

Communication Skills

addressed
arbitrated
arranged
authored
corresponded
developed
directed
drafted
edited
enlisted
formulated
influenced
interpreted
lectured
mediated
moderated
motivated
negotiated
persuaded
promoted
publicised
reconciled
recruited
spoke
translated
wrote

Clerical Skills

approved
arranged
compiled
classified
generated
implemented
monitored
organised
prepared
specified

Management Skills

analysed
assigned
attained
chaired
contracted
consolidated
coordinated
delegated
developed
directed
evaluated
executed
improved
increased
organised
oversaw
planned
produced
recommended
reviewed
scheduled
strengthened
supervised

Creative Skills

acted
conceived
designed
developed
established
fashioned
founded
invented
originated
planned
revitalised
shaped

Research Skills

clarified
collected
critiqued
diagnosed
evaluated
extracted
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
investigated
organised
reviewed
summarised
surveyed

Supervision & Training Skills

adapted
assisted
coached
communicated
counselled
developed
diagnosed
enabled
educated
encouraged
evaluated
expedited
explained
facilitated
familiarised
guided
informed
initiated
represented
stimulated

Defining your skills

As you are preparing your descriptions of your worklife achievements for presentation to others, consider the following resolutions before you begin:

- I will judge the existence of a skill by my own standards and satisfaction.
- I will detect several individual skills in everything I do and have done.
- I acknowledge that once a skill has been used—however long ago—I will always have it to call upon.
- I commit myself to the need to complete the inventory of all my skills, then to work hard at rearranging my skills in:

  (i) terms of those I enjoy using, even though in some cases I may not use them very well;

  (ii) ways which will provide insight into alternative sets of job tasks.

A skill is:

- a specific behaviour that results in an achievement;
- ways in which you tend to be successful when dealing with problems, tasks and other life experiences;
- characteristics that give you the ability to do something;
- attributes used in dealing with DATA (analysing, compiling), PEOPLE (persuading, negotiating, supervising) and THINGS (handling, driving, operating);
- qualities, traits, talents which are used in living each day;
- activities which you may do with great difficulty, some difficulty or easily. (N.B. You do not have to do things easily in order to have a skill.)
- a capacity, a natural gift, an instinct, an eye for, an ear for, a knack, a proficiency, a handiness or a strong point.

Rehearsing your answers

Questions often asked at interview discussions follow below. Consider each question and rehearse your response:

- Why are you applying for this job?
- How does your current work experience relate to this job?
- What are your major strengths?
- In your last job, what accomplishment gave you the most satisfaction?
- Briefly outline your ideas on how you would carry out this job.
- What are your career plans?
- What issues do you see affecting this type of work in the near future?
- How do you go about setting work tasks for other people?

Write here additional questions you consider that you may be asked:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Difficult interview questions

Record here questions that could be awkward for you to answer:

Practise your answers here. Write them down.

Questions you should ask

When an interviewer asks you, the applicant, if you have any questions, it can serve two purposes for you:

a. to obtain information which you did not manage to obtain during pre-interview research.

b. to ask questions which impress the interviewer.

Following on from (b) above, you do not help your case by giving no response, i.e. silence, or a lame 'er . . . no' answer to this question. You should be ready to ask at least two questions you have prepared. This period will also give you the opportunity to summarise and say things which the interviewer has not yet encouraged you to present so far in the interview. Consider the following questions when you are preparing your own:

- How will performance in the job be measured?
- What resources can be requested to help achieve the objectives of the position?
- What specific projects do you see me starting first if I am employed in this job?
- What are the typical problems encountered in carrying out this job?
- What decision-making authority is in the position?
- When will I be informed of results of my application?

☛ *Resolve to make it clear that you are more interested in the actual tasks of the position than in the benefits it may provide.*

Planning your career discussion

Complete the following in readiness for your next career discussion:

Interview time and date: _____

Person(s) to see: _____

_____

Person's position title: _____

Material to take:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Facts to remember about my past accomplishments:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Important facts about prospective job :

- _____
- _____
- _____

Key points to bring into discussion:

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

4. _____

_____

_____

Avoiding hasty resignation

As many as one in five employees resign from their current employer within the first twelve months of employment. Most do so without careful evaluation of the value of staying. Consider the following before you take such action:

Your career action step may have been unsuccessful because it lacked thoroughness in preparation.

You may have carried out insufficient research before initiating the request.

If you resign, you will forfeit:

- your knowledge of your employers' history, products, services;
- the opportunity to build on your record of accomplishments known to others;
- awareness of career path growth potential where you currently work;
- your understanding of the power and 'political systems';
- your record of successful performance;
- access to your network of resources to help you;
- the accrued benefits in superannuation, insurances, sick leave entitlement;
- the interest your current employer has in supporting your development and providing career mobility;
- the value of knowing the behaviour characteristics of your work colleagues, your manager, the executives.

Your career development contract

As a result of the hard work, deep thought and information obtained, my personal career development contract follows:

I will prepare for every career action step by:

-
-
-

I can keep up my confidence by:

-
-
-

I will seek and accept help and support from:

-
-
-

I will improve my chances of success in my career transitions by:

-
-
-

Additional Notes

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WORKLIFE titles can be used for:

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